

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12518

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VT GV

SUBJECT: VATICAN-GUINEA RELATIONS

FROM NEWSOM

1. IN CONVERSATION NOV 13 WITH ARCHBISHOP GIOVANNI BENELLI, VATICAN "DEPUTY SECSTATE, HE SAID THAT THE SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN GUINEA WAS EXTREMELY PRECARIOUS WITH THE ONLY PRELATE IMPRISONED AND THE TEN OR SO PRIESTS ABLE TO MOVE ABOUT THE COUNTRY ONLY WITH THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY. QUITE SURPRISINGLY, HOWEVER, THIS SUMMER TOURE HIMSELF INVITED THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATE WHO RESIDES IN DAKAR TO VISIT CONAKRY. TOURE HAD OBVIOUSLY ORCHESTRATED THE VISIT VERY WELL, FOR SHORTLY AFTER THE APOSTOLIC DEL'S ARRIVAL HE INTRODUCE HIM AT A MASS MEETING, SAYING, "HERE IS THE POPE'S REPRESENTATIVE COME TO VISIT US," AND THEN PULLED FROM HIS POCKET A LETTER WHICH HE ANNOUNCED WAS FROM ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO TO THE POPE. THE VATICAN HAS NOW REASON TO HOPE THAT TOURE MAY IN THE NEAR FUTURE BE WILLING TO RELEASE ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO, BUT THEY FEAR THAT HE WILL ASK A HIGH PRICE FOR SUCH A GESTURE. BENELLI COULD ONLY SPECULATE THAT IN EXCHANGE FOR TCHIDIMBO'S FREEDOM TOURE WOULD ASK FOR A LARGE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE WEST. IN ANY EVENT, HE BELIEVE THAT TOURE WAS SEEKING AN OPENING TO THE WEST.

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2. NEWSOM SAID US MADE EFFORT MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH GUINEA;
HE HAD VISITED THERE IN JULY. IT WAS NOT EASY FOR US TO DO MORE,
HOWEVER, SINCE GUINEAN SUSPICION OF FOREIGN TECHNICIANS MADE ANY
AID PROGRAM DIFFICULT. BENELLI EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH US
EFFORTS, SAYING THESE WERE IMPORTANT FOR ALL. VOLPE

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